

Wicomico Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting
May 26, 2020
Minutes

The Recreation and Parks Commission Meeting met in regular session on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 via Webex due to the Coronavirus restrictions.

The following Commission and staff members were on the call:

Commission Members

Allen Brown
Jay Disharoon
Tom Bowden
Shawn Johnson
George Burbage
James Reid
Erin Smith
Deena Cook

Staff Members

Steve Miller
Chuck Poole
James Simmons
Linda Lyons

Chairman Allen Brown called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. The minutes from December 3, 2020 and April 28, 2020 were approved as submitted.

Mr. Poole reported that the Parks division is completing seasonal projects such as grass cutting and landscaping at the parks. With the reopening of many parks, traffic has increased with additional trash collection required. Cove Road and Roaring Point beaches were opened last weekend. Overall experience and behavior of the public was positive. Groups under 10 were noted and there were no reported violations of social distancing protocols. The bulkhead renovation project at Cedar Hill will be sent to the State next week. This process can take up to six months for approval to proceed.

Mr. Poole continued with the following ballfield updates: Field 3 at East Wicomico Little League, Willards Field 4 and Delmar Sr. league field have been stripped and new materials are in place. These fields will be playable by Friday. Field 7-1/2 is 75% complete and is impressive. He noted the dugouts on fields 1-4 were expanded and field 1 bleachers were installed. Cameras are being installed on all fields for live streaming capabilities. The park lighting has been changed to LED bulbs.

The Nick Meyer basketball court will be repaired this week with the plan to open the end of June. Bathrooms are still closed to the public at this time. A meeting will be held on May 27 with Emergency Services to review necessary procedures to open restrooms. The water will be turned on this week and tested next week. Ultimately, the Health Department will make the final decision to approve opening of public restrooms. Due to hiring freezes as a result of the pandemic, the Parks division is understaffed by eight employees. Mr. Poole will be requesting permission to hire part time staff to handle the upkeep of the parks.

Mr. Simmons presented the Recreation updates. The Recreation staff has transitioned programs from physical to virtual programs. One highlighted event was a 5K/300 meals for the Virtual Run/Walk to

benefit the front line workers of Wicomico County. Three hundred meals from local restaurants were secured and provided to Deer's Head, PRMC, Nursing Homes, and local Police and Fire Departments. The department has been able to offer a virtual karate program. This is a paid program with 40 participants to date. Typical registration would run 60 participants. Plans are coming together to move forward with modified summer camp programs. Pemberton Nature Camp and West Side Community Center would be offered in addition to a Kids Klub site at the Civic Center since Board of Education facilities are not available. Attendance would be reduced to thirty to thirty-five children. The program would begin after July 4th. The summer playground series from last 2019 might be in jeopardy due to capacity limitations. Mr. Simmons reached out to the board for suggestions to modify this program. A virtual bonfire event will be held this Friday, May 29 via social media. Families will be encouraged to make a bonfire, camp and enjoy the outdoors.

Mr. Miller addressed the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to programs and facilities. The Department recently led a task force to provide recommendations regarding phased reopening plans for recreation & leisure. This task force consisted of a group of twenty-one public, private and nonprofit professionals including: community organizations including the YMCA, City of Salisbury, Salvation Army, Fruitland Falcons, Health Department, Crown Sports Center, District 8 Little League, Wicomico Sheriff and Emergency Services. A draft report was submitted to the Executive as well as Emergency Services and the Health Department last week. This report included recommendations from the task force to introduce activities that would relate to the three phase opening plan laid out by Governor Hogan. Upon approval of the draft, a copy will be available to the commission.

Mr. Miller gave an update on Program Open Space. The annual plan from the State should be available in the coming days in terms of FY21 funding. A pause has been placed on the exterior improvements to the Civic Center until State/County budgets come into clearer view.

Mr. Miller opened the discussion regarding Ms. Pepper, owner of Roaring Point Campground. She feels there is confusion regarding the campground and park having the same name, "Roaring Point". He noted the campground was private and the park is a public facility. She is requesting a possible park name change. The board agreed to research how /if the name could be changed. Suggestion was made to have input from the surrounding community. Another suggestion was to increase signage in that area to reduce confusion. The board agreed to research the options then revisit the issue in the fall.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,
Linda Lyons